

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T STATE 170800

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:-PFOR, CB

SUBJECT: NEANG CHIN HAN

1. NEANG CHIN HAN CALLED ON DEPTOFF AUGUST 3 AT HIS REQUEST. DURING CONVERSATION HAN REPEATED HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH INDEPENDENCE OF THE MILITARY WHICH, IN HIS OPINION, SHOULD BE PLACED FIRMLY UNDER CIVILIAN CONTROL. THIS, HE AGREED, COULD ONLY BE DONE BY MARSHAL LON NOL, PERHAPS, ACCORDING TO HAN, BY APPOINTING SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE WITHIN THE CABINET. HE ALSO REITERATED UNHAPPINESS WITH PRESIDENT LON NOL'S CONTINUED ROLE BUT DID NOT, AS OTHERS HAVE DONE, SUGGEST HIS DEPARTURE FROM CAMBODIA. RATHER, HE WOULD PREFER TO SEE LON NOL ASSUME A PURELY FIGUREHEAD ROLE AS "FATHER OF THE NATION" AND LEAVE THE RUNNING OF THE GOVERNMENT TO A CABINET COMPOSED OF YOUNGER OFFICIALS WITH NO PARTICIPATION BY LON NOL CRONIES. WHEN PRESSED FOR NAMES OF POTENTIAL "YOUNG" LEADERS, HE LAMELY ADMITTED HE HAD NONE READY AND THAT FORMER CHARGE ENDERS HAD POSED THE SAME QUESTION IN PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS. WITH REGARD TO LON NOL REMOVING HIMSELF FROM AN ACTIVE ROLE AND PLACING THE MILITARY UNDER CIVILIAN CONTROL, HE EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THIS WAS UP TO THE US

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TROL, HE EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THIS WAS UP TO THE US

TO EFFECT. DEPTOFF'S ASSERTION THAT NOT ONLY IS THERE A LIMIT TO WHAT THE USG CAN DO IN CAMBODIA BUT ALSO A POINT AT WHICH THE KHMER THEMSELVES MUST ASSUME THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES DID NOT APPEAR TO PERSUADE HIM.

2. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION, HAN SUGGESTED THAT THERE MIGHT BE "CHANGES" IN FEW MONTHS WITH JUNIOR OFFICERS TAKING MATTERS IN THEIR OWN HANDS. IT WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER HE WAS TESTING THE MATTER FOR DEPTOFF'S REACTION OR WHETHER THERE IS SERIOUS TALK OF SUCH A MOVE. IN ANY CASE, HE WAS NOT RPT NOT GIVEN ANY ENCOURAGEMENT.

3. AS CONCERNS HIS FUTURE PLANS, HAN STATED HE WILL RETURN TO PARIS AT END OF THIS WEEK AND WILL SEEK EMPLOYMENT THERE. HE DOES NOT REPEAT NOT INTEND TO RETURN TO PHNOM PENH UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, HE ASKED THAT WE QUERY PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET AS TO WHETHER OR NOT HE WISHES HAN TO CONTINUE PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH OPPOSITION ELEMENTS IN FRANCE. ACCORDING TO HAN, HE DID THIS PRIOR TO COMING TO THE US BUT BELIEVES IT USELESS EFFORT. NEVERTHELESS, HE IS PREPARED CONTINUE IF PRIME MINISTER DO DESIRES IT. KISSINGER

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NNN

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